

Section VI. Organization and Administration

¶ 243. *Primary Tasks*

The local church shall be organized so that it can pursue its primary task and mission in the context of its own community—reaching out and receiving with joy all who will respond; encouraging people in their relationship with God and inviting them to commitment to God's love in Jesus Christ; providing opportunities for them to seek strengthening and growth in spiritual formation; and supporting them to live lovingly and justly in the power of the Holy Spirit as faithful disciples.

In carrying out its primary task, it shall be organized so that adequate provision is made for these basic responsibilities: (1) planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, and witness for persons and families within and without the congregation; (2) providing for effective pastoral and lay leadership; (3) providing for financial support, physical facilities, and the legal obligations of the church; (4) utilizing the appropriate relationships and resources of the district and annual conference; (5) providing for the proper creation, maintenance, and disposition of documentary record material of the local church; and (6) seeking inclusiveness in all aspects of its life.

¶ 244. *Organization*

The basic organizational plan for the local church shall include provision for the following units: a charge conference, a church council, a committee on pastor-parish relations, a board of trustees, a committee on finance, a committee on lay leadership, and such other elected leaders, commissions, councils, committees, and task forces as the charge conference may determine. Every local church shall develop a plan for organizing its administrative and programmatic responsibilities. Each local congregation shall provide a comprehensive program of nurture, outreach, and witness, along with leadership training, and the planning and administration of the congregation's organizational and temporal life, in accordance with the mission of The United Methodist Church (*see* ¶¶ 120-124).

1. The church council and all other administrative and programmatic structures of the local church shall be amenable to the charge conference (*see* ¶ 246). The church council shall function as the executive agency of the charge conference.

2. Alternative plans may be developed in accordance with the provisions of ¶ 247.2. Such alternatives include: nurture, outreach, and witness ministries; administrative council; or administrative board/council on ministries.

3. Members of the church council or alternative structure shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the church, are loyal to the ethical standards of The United Methodist Church set forth in the Social Principles, and are competent to administer its affairs. It

shall include youth members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All persons with vote shall be members of the local church, except where central conference legislation provides otherwise. The pastor shall be the administrative officer and, as such, shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless otherwise restricted by the *Discipline*.5(1)

¶ 245. *Information Technology*

Each local church, as it creates or maintains computerized information and data, is strongly encouraged to confer with its annual conference for recommendations and guidelines as it relates to information technology.

The Charge Conference

Members of the charge conference shall be persons of genuine Christian character who love the Church, are morally disciplined, are committed to the mandate of inclusiveness in the life of the Church, are loyal to the ethical standards of The United Methodist Church set forth in the Social Principles, and are competent to administer its affairs. It shall include youth members chosen according to the same standards as adults. All shall be professing members of the local church, except where central conference legislation provides otherwise. The pastor shall be the administrative officer, and as such shall be an ex officio member of all conferences, boards, councils, commissions, committees, and task forces, unless restricted by the *Discipline*.

¶ 246. *General Provisions*

1. Within the pastoral charge the basic unit in the connectional system of The United Methodist Church is the **charge conference**. The charge conference shall therefore be organized from the church or churches in every pastoral charge as set forth in the Constitution (¶ 43). It shall meet annually for the purposes set forth in ¶ 247. It may meet at other times as indicated in § 7 below.

2. The membership of the charge conference shall be all members of the church council or other appropriate body, together with retired ordained ministers and retired diaconal ministers who elect to hold their membership in said charge conference and any others as may be designated in the *Discipline*. If more than one church is on the pastoral charge, all members of each church council shall be members of the charge conference.

3. The charge conference may make provision for recognition of the faithful service of members of the church council by electing them honorary members. An honorary member shall be entitled to all the privileges of a member, except the right to vote.

4. The district superintendent shall fix the time of meetings of the charge conference. The charge conference shall determine the place of meeting.

5. The district superintendent shall preside at the meetings of the charge conference or may designate an elder to preside.

6. The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

7. Special sessions may be called by the district superintendent after consultation with the pastor of the charge, or by the pastor with the written consent of the district superintendent. The purpose of such special session shall be stated in the call, and only such business shall be transacted as is in harmony with the purposes stated in the call. Any such special session may be convened as a church conference in accordance with ¶ 248.

8. Notice of time and place of a regular or special session of the charge conference shall be given at least ten days in advance by two or more of the following (except as local laws may otherwise provide): from the pulpit of the church, in its weekly bulletin, in a local church publication, or by mail.

9. A charge conference shall be conducted in the language of the majority, with adequate provision being made for translation.

10. A **joint charge conference** for two or more pastoral charges may be held at the same time and place, as the district superintendent may determine.

¶ 247. Powers and Duties

1. The charge conference shall be the connecting link between the local church and the general Church and shall have general oversight of the church council(s).

2. The charge conference, the district superintendent, and the pastor shall organize and administer the pastoral charge and churches according to the policies and plans herein set forth. When the membership size, program scope, mission resources, or other circumstances so require, the charge conference may, in consultation with and upon the approval of the district superintendent, modify the organizational plans; *provided* that the provisions of ¶ 243 are observed.

3. The primary responsibilities of the charge conference in the annual meeting shall be to review and evaluate the total mission and ministry of the church (¶¶ 120-124), receive reports, and adopt objectives and goals recommended by the church council that are in keeping with the objectives of The United Methodist Church.

4. The charge conference **recording secretary** shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings and shall be the custodian of all records and reports, and with the presiding officer, shall sign the minutes. A copy of the minutes shall be provided for the district superintendent, and a permanent copy shall be retained for church files. When there is only one local church on a charge, the secretary of the church council shall be the secretary of the charge conference. When there is more than one church on a charge, one of the secretaries of the church councils shall be elected by the charge conference to serve as its secretary.

5. *a)* It is strongly recommended that the charge conference elect a **church historian** in order to preserve the history of each local church. The responsibilities of the historian are to keep the **historical records** up to date; serve as chairperson of the committee on records and history, if any; cooperate with the annual conference commission on archives and history; provide an annual report on the care of church records and historical materials to the charge conference; and also provide, with the pastor and the committee on records and history, if any, for the preservation of all local church records and historical materials no longer in current use. Records

and historical materials include all documents, minutes, journals, diaries, reports, letters, pamphlets, papers, manuscripts, maps, photographs, books, audiovisuals, sound recordings, magnetic or other tapes, or any other documentary material, regardless of form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to any provisions of the *Discipline* in connection with the transaction of church business by any local church of The United Methodist Church or any of its constituent predecessors. The church historian may be a member of the church council. This person may also hold another elected position on the council.

b) There may be a local church **committee on records and history**, chaired by the church historian, to assist in fulfilling these responsibilities.

6. Each charge is encouraged to be inclusive in the make-up of the council so that all segments of the congregation are represented.

7. The charge conference may establish a limit to the consecutive terms of office for any or all of the elected or appointed officers of the local church, except where otherwise mandated. It is recommended that no officer serve more than three consecutive years in the same office.

8. The charge conference shall examine and recommend to the district committee on ordained ministry, faithfully adhering to the provisions of ¶ 311.2b, candidates for the ordained ministry who have been professing members in good standing of The United Methodist Church for at least two years; whose gifts, evidence of God's grace, and call to the ministry clearly establish them as candidates; and who have met the educational requirements. It is out of the faith and witness of the congregation that men and women respond to God's call to ordained ministry. Every local church should intentionally nurture candidates for ordained ministry and provide spiritual and some financial support, including the Ministerial Education Fund, for their education and formation as servant leaders for the ministry of the whole people of God.

9. The charge conference shall examine and recommend, faithfully adhering to the provisions of ¶ 312, renewal of candidacy of candidates for the ordained ministry.

10. The charge conference shall examine and recommend to the responsible Church agency any candidates for Church-related vocations.

11. The charge conference shall inquire annually into the gifts, labors, and usefulness of the lay speakers and certified lay ministers related to the charge and recommend to the district and/or conference committee on lay speaking those persons who have met the standards set forth for a local church lay speaker and/or for certified lay speaker and certified lay minister (¶¶ 267-270).

12. The charge conference shall receive reports annually on all local church organized Volunteer In Mission (UMVIM) teams, and the total number of local church participants in any UMVIM team, and shall forward the combined report to the annual conference and the general church through the regular annual local church statistical report.

13. The charge conference shall in consultation with the district superintendent set the compensation of the pastor and other staff appointed by the bishop.6(2)

14. As soon as practicable after the session of annual conference, each district superintendent or designated agent shall notify each local church in the district what amounts have been apportioned to it for World Service, conference benevolences and other general

Church, jurisdictional, and annual conference funds. In preparation for and at the charge conference, it shall be the responsibility of the district superintendent, the pastor, and the lay member(s) of the annual conference and/or the church lay leader(s) to interpret to each charge conference the importance of these apportioned funds, explaining the causes supported by each of them and their place in the total program of the Church. **The World Service Fund** is basic in the financial program of The United Methodist Church. World Service on apportionment represents the minimum needs for the mission and ministry of the Church. **Conference benevolences** represent the minimum needs for mission and ministry in the annual conference. Payment in full of these apportionments by local churches is the first benevolent responsibility of the church (§ 812).

15. The charge conference shall receive and act on the annual report from the pastor concerning the membership. (*See* § 231.)

16. In those instances where there are two or more churches on a pastoral charge, the charge conference may provide for a charge or parish council, a chargewide or parish treasurer, and such other officers, commissions, committees, and task groups as necessary to carry on the work of the charge.

17. In those instances where there are two or more churches on a pastoral charge, the charge conference may elect a chargewide or parish committee on lay leadership, a chargewide or parish committee on pastor-parish relations, a chargewide or parish committee on finance, and a chargewide or parish board of trustees in such instances where property is held in common by two or more churches of the charge. All churches of the charge shall be represented on such chargewide or parish committees or boards. Chargewide or parish organization shall be consistent with disciplinary provisions for the local church.

18. In instances of multiple church charges, the charge conference shall provide for an equitable distribution of parsonage maintenance and upkeep expense or adequate housing allowance (if annual conference policy permits) among the several churches.

19. The charge conference shall promote awareness of and concurrence with Policies Relative to Socially Responsible Investments (§ 716), the Social Principles (§§ 160-166), and *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church*.

20. If any charge conference initiates, joins, monitors, or terminates a boycott, the guidelines in *The Book of Resolutions*, 2004, should be followed. The General Conference is the only body that can initiate, empower, or join a boycott in the name of The United Methodist Church.

21. When authorized by the district superintendent and the district board of church location and building, the charge conference may provide for the sponsoring of satellite congregations.

22. The charge conference shall have such other duties and responsibilities as the general, jurisdictional, or annual conference may duly commit to it.

§ 248. *The Church Conference*

To encourage broader participation by members of the church, the charge conference may

be convened as the **church conference**, extending the vote to all professing members of the local church present at such meetings. The church conference shall be authorized by the district superintendent. It may be called at the discretion of the district superintendent or following a written request to the district superintendent by one of the following: the pastor, the church council, or 10 percent of the professing membership of the local church. In any case a copy of the request shall be given to the pastor. Additional regulations governing the call and conduct of the charge conference as set forth in ¶¶ 246-247 shall apply also to the church conference. A joint church conference for two or more churches may be held at the same time and place as the district superintendent may determine. A church conference shall be conducted in the language of the majority with adequate provision being made for translation. (For church local conference *See* ¶ 2526.)

¶ 249. *Election of Leaders*

The charge conference, or church conference authorized by the district superintendent, shall elect upon recommendation by the committee on lay leadership of each local church on the pastoral charge, or by nomination from the floor and by vote of each such local church, at least the following leaders for the four basic responsibilities (¶ 244):

1. Chairperson of the church council.
2. The committee on lay leadership.
3. The committee on pastor-parish relations and its chairperson.
4. A chairperson and additional members of the committee on finance; the financial secretary and the church treasurer(s) if not paid employees of the local church; and the trustees as provided in ¶¶ 2525-2527, unless otherwise required by state law.
5. The lay member(s) of the annual conference and lay leader(s).
6. A recording secretary (*See* ¶ 247.4).
7. Special attention shall be given to the inclusion of women, men, youth, young adults, persons over sixty-five years of age, persons with disabilities, and racial and ethnic persons.
8. All local church offices and all chairs of organizations within the local church may be shared between two persons, with the following exceptions: trustee, officers of the board of trustees, treasurer, lay member of annual conference, member and chairperson of the committee on staff- or pastor-parish relations. When two persons jointly hold a position that entails membership on the church council, both may be members of it.

¶ 250. *Removal of Officers and Filling of Vacancies*

If a leader or officer who has been elected by the charge conference is unable or unwilling to perform the duties reasonably expected of such a leader or officer, the district superintendent may call a special session of the charge conference in accordance with ¶ 246.7. The purpose of such special session shall be stated as “Consideration for the removal of person(s) from office and the election of person(s) to fill vacancy(ies).” The committee on lay leadership (¶¶ 259.1, 247.17) shall meet as soon as possible after the special session of the charge conference has been announced and shall propose person(s) who may be elected if vacancy(ies) occur at the charge

conference. If the charge conference votes to remove a person or persons from office, the vacancy(ies) shall be filled in the manner prescribed for elections in accordance with ¶ 249. When a local church trustee is under consideration for removal and the pastoral charge consists of two or more churches, a church local conference shall be called instead of a charge conference, in accordance with ¶ 2525.

¶ 251. Duties of Leaders and Members

1. Out of the professing membership of each local church (¶ 126), there shall be elected by the charge conference a **lay leader** who shall function as the primary lay representative of the laity in that local church and shall have the following responsibilities:

a) fostering awareness of the role of laity both within the congregation and through their ministries in the home, workplace, community, and world, and finding ways within the community of faith to recognize all these ministries;

b) meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss the state of the church and the needs for ministry;

c) membership in the charge conference and the church council, the committee on finance, the committee on lay leadership, and the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations, where, along with the pastor, the lay leader shall serve as an interpreter of the actions and programs of the annual conference and the general Church (to be better equipped to comply with this responsibility, it is recommended that a lay leader also serve as a lay member of annual conference);

d) continuing involvement in study and training opportunities to develop a growing understanding of the Church's reason for existence and the types of ministry that will most effectively fulfill the Church's mission;

e) assisting in advising the church council of opportunities available and the needs expressed for a more effective ministry of the church through its laity in the community;

f) informing the laity of training opportunities provided by the annual conference. Where possible, the lay leader shall attend training opportunities in order to strengthen his or her work. The lay leader is urged to become a certified lay speaker.

In instances where more than one church is on a charge, the charge conference shall elect additional lay leaders so that there will be one lay leader in each church. Associate lay leaders may be elected to work with the lay leader in any local church.

2. The **lay member(s)** of the annual conference and alternates shall be elected annually or quadrennially as the annual conference directs. If the charge's lay representative to the annual conference shall cease to be a member of the charge or shall for any reason fail to serve, an alternate member in the order of election shall serve in place.

Both the lay members and the alternates shall have been professing members in good standing of The United Methodist Church for at least two years and shall have been active participants for at least four years next preceding their election (*see* ¶ 32), except in a newly organized church, which shall have the privilege of representation at the annual conference session.⁷⁽³⁾ No local pastor shall be eligible as a lay member or alternate.⁸⁽⁴⁾ United Methodist

churches that become part of an ecumenical shared ministry shall not be deprived of their right of representation by a lay member in the annual conference. The lay member(s) of the annual conference, along with the pastor, shall serve as an interpreter of the actions of the annual conference session. These persons shall report to the local church council on actions of the annual conference as soon as possible, but not later than three months after the close of the conference.

3. The **church council chairperson** shall be elected by the charge conference annually and shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) leading the council in fulfilling its responsibilities (*see* ¶ 249);
- b) preparing and communicating the agenda of the council meetings in consultation with the pastor(s), lay leader, and other appropriate persons;
- c) reviewing and assigning responsibility for the implementation of actions taken by the council;
- d) communicating with members of the council and others as appropriate to permit informed action at council meetings;
- e) coordinating the various activities of the council;
- f) providing the initiative and leadership for the council as it does the planning, establishing of objectives and goals, and evaluating;
- g) participating in leadership training programs as offered by the annual conference and/or district.

The church council chairperson shall be entitled to attend meetings of all boards and committees of the church unless specifically limited by the *Book of Discipline*. The chairperson is encouraged to attend annual conference.

The Church Council

¶ 252.

1. *Purpose*—The **church council** shall provide for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach, witness, and resources in the local church. It shall also provide for the administration of its organization and temporal life. It shall envision, plan, implement, and annually evaluate the mission and ministry of the church. The church council shall be amenable to and function as the administrative agency of the charge conference (¶ 244).

2. *Mission and Ministry*—Nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities include:

a) The nurturing ministries of the congregation shall give attention to but not be limited to education, worship, Christian formation, membership care, small groups, and stewardship. Attention must be given to the needs of individuals and families of all ages.

b) The outreach ministries of the church shall give attention to local and larger community ministries of compassion, justice, and advocacy. These ministries include church and society, global ministries, higher education and campus ministry, health and welfare, Christian unity and interreligious concerns, religion and race, and the status and role of women.

c) The witness ministries of the church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing of personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications; Lay Speaking Ministries; and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ.

d) The leadership development and resourcing ministries shall give attention to the ongoing preparation and development of lay and clergy leaders for the ministry of the church (§ 259.1).

e) The nurture, outreach, and witness ministries and their accompanying responsibilities shall include consideration of (i) the election of a prayer coordinator to promote prayer and mobilize the local church to pray, (ii) establishing a prayer room or designated place for prayer and prayer resources, and (iii) encouraging intentional prayer for the pastoral leadership of the local church.

3. *Meetings*—a) The council shall meet at least quarterly. The chairperson or the pastor may call special meetings.

b) In order for the council to give adequate consideration to the missional purpose of the local church, it is recommended that the first agenda item at each meeting be related to its ministries of nurture, outreach, and witness. The administrative and supportive responsibilities of the church will then be given attention. It is recommended that the council use a consensus/discernment model of decision-making.

4. *Other Responsibilities*—It will also be the responsibility of the church council to:

a) review the membership of the local church;

b) fill interim vacancies occurring among the lay officers of the church between sessions of the annual charge conference;

c) establish the budget on recommendation of the committee on finance and ensure adequate provision for the financial needs of the church;

d) recommend to the charge conference the salary and other remuneration of the pastor(s) and staff members after receiving recommendations from the committee on pastor-parish relations (staff-parish relations);

e) review the recommendation of the committee on pastor-parish relations regarding provision of adequate housing for the pastor(s), and report the same to the charge conference for approval. Housing provisions shall comply with the annual conference housing policy and parsonage standards. Housing shall not be considered as part of compensation or remuneration.

5. *Membership*—The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation as defined in § 252.2. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eleven persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The council shall include persons who represent the program ministries of the church as outlined in § 243. The membership shall include but not be limited to the following:

a) the chairperson of the church council;

b) the lay leader;

c) the chairperson and/or a representative of the pastor-parish relations committee;

- d) the chairperson and/or a representative of the committee on finance;
- e) the chairperson and/or a representative of the board of trustees;
- f) the church treasurer;
- g) a lay member to annual conference;
- h) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Men;
- i) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Women;
- j) a representative of the United Methodist Youth;
- k) the pastor(s).

6. *Quorum*—The members present and voting at any duly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Specialized Ministries

¶ 253. Age-Level, Family, and Specialized-Ministries Coordinators (see also ¶ 252)

The charge conference may elect annually a **coordinator of children's ministries**, a **coordinator of youth ministries**, a **coordinator of adult ministries**, and a **coordinator of family ministries**. Where young adult and specific age-level ministries would be enhanced, **coordinators of young adult and/or older adult ministries** may be elected. Where there are civic youth-serving agencies or Scouting ministry units present there may be elected a Scouting coordinator. Where needs for specialized areas of ministry arise (for example, single adults or persons with disabilities), coordinators of these areas of ministry may be elected.

¶ 254. Other Ministry Group Coordinators

In order to fulfill the mission of the local church, the charge conference may elect annually a coordinator or ministry group chairperson for any or all of these areas: Christian unity and interreligious concerns, church and society, community volunteers, education, evangelism, higher education and campus ministry, missions, prayer advocacy, religion and race, status and role of women, earth advocacy, stewardship, and worship.

Where desirable, the charge conference may combine coordinators' or ministry group chairpersons' assignments. Each coordinator or ministry group chairperson, if elected, shall work with the church council (or other appropriate body), pastor(s), and other church leaders to address the needs and opportunities of the particular area, utilizing all appropriate resources and relationships of the district, annual conference, and/or general church.

¶ 255. Church-School Superintendent and Small-Group Coordinator

The charge conference may elect: (1) a **superintendent of the church school** or Sunday school, and/or a **coordinator of small-group ministries**, who shall be responsible for helping to organize and supervise the total program for nurturing faith, building Christian community, and equipping people of all ages for ministry in daily life through small groups in the church; (2) a **health-and-welfare ministries coordinator**, who shall assist the local church and its people in being involved in direct service to persons in need; and (3) a **communications coordinator**, who

shall assist the local church and its members with communication tasks by making available ideas, resources, and skills.

¶ 256. *Program Ministries*

The ministries of the local church are offered so that people encounter God's redeeming love for the world and respond by participating in God's action in the world. To achieve this ministry, people need to be involved in a variety of small-group settings. Some will be formed by the church council. Others will emerge with the approval of this body. Another type is historical, expressing itself in organizational structures that are related to counterparts in annual conferences and the general Church. These are referred to as **program ministries** and are related to the church council.

1. *The Church School and Small-Group Ministries*—In each local church there shall be a variety of small-group ministries, including the church school, for supporting the formation of Christian disciples focused on the transformation of the world. These small groups may concentrate on teaching and learning, fellowship, support, community ministries, and accountability. Members of small groups will build their knowledge of the Bible, the Christian faith, The United Methodist Church, and the societal context in which the church finds itself. In addition, small groups, including the church school, shall provide people with opportunities for practicing skills for faithful discipleship, including but not limited to worship, faith sharing, the creation of new faith communities, spiritual discernment, Bible study, theological reflection, prayer, community building, service with the poor and marginalized, and advocacy for peace and justice. Local churches or charges are encouraged to develop a policy to provide for the safety of the infants, children, and youth entrusted to their care.

a) *The Church School*—In each local church there shall be a **church school** for the purpose of accomplishing the church's educational ministry.

The church school is challenged to create communities in which people of all ages experience God's active presence in their lives; foster healthy, nonviolent relationships within the congregation and community; testify to the reconciling love of God through Christ; and live out their faith in the world as witnesses to the coming reign of God.

b) *Accountable Discipleship*—Historically class leaders provided lay pastoral leadership, and classes and class meetings were the basic structural means of Christian spiritual formation in the early Methodist societies.

Class leaders may be commissioned and classes may be organized within the local congregation for the purpose of forming persons as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ through mutual accountability and support for witnessing to him in the world and for following his teachings through acts of compassion, justice, worship, and devotion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (See ¶ 103, “The Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies” [page 72], and ¶ 1118.)

c) *Mission and Ministry Groups*—Christian discipleship is patterned after the servanthood of Jesus, who cared for the sick, fed the hungry, and befriended the outcast. People may participate in small groups in order to serve the needs of the poor and marginalized,

advocate for social justice, and demonstrate their faith in all their relationships and whatever setting they find themselves in.

d) Support Groups—Where needed, the local church may organize small groups to support particular needs of congregation and community members, including but not limited to care and prayer groups, divorce recovery, grief recovery, parenting groups, and support for people who are suffering from chronic illness, including persons with mental illnesses and their families.

2. Children's Ministries—Children's ministries—for, with, and by children—include all ministries involving children within the life of the congregational community, including but not limited to Sunday school, vacation Bible school, nursery ministries, children's choir and music ministries, fellowship groups, support groups, short-term study groups, children's worship experiences, mission education experiences, intergenerational activities, and all weekday programs for children of all ages.

a) If there is a coordinator of children's ministries, the coordinator shall be responsible for assuring that children are considered and included within the life of the congregation. The coordinator will lead the children's council, when organized, and will work closely with clergy and other program-related staff. The coordinator will vision, plan, and advocate for children, particularly in the areas of faith development, safety, and discipleship. The coordinator will work with other leaders in the congregation to assure that policies and procedures are in place to help keep all children and the adults who care for and work with them safe. These policies and procedures include such things as background checks, having at least two adults per group, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation and first-aid training. The coordinator will also advocate for mission education for children, including The United Methodist Children's Fund for Christian Mission.

b) If there is a children's council, it shall be responsible for planning, visioning, and advocating for children within the congregation, the community, and the world. The council will set policies and procedures related to children, oversee the planning of short-term experiences, consider children's ministry needs within the whole of the congregation's ministries, and communicate with parents and the congregation. The children's council will work closely with the coordinator of children's ministries and church staff responsible for ministry with children, including children's choirs and weekday ministries. The children's council is accountable to the group responsible for the local church's educational ministry.

c) Weekday Ministry Board—The term *weekday ministry* applies to any regularly planned ministry for children. When appropriate, one or more weekday ministry boards may be organized to oversee the weekday ministry programs of the congregation. The board's membership should be mostly professing members of the congregation, with parent, church staff, and weekday ministry staff representatives. The board will set policies consistent with the congregation's policies, state mandates, and sound business practices. The board will guide weekday ministries as appropriate opportunities for faith development, mission outreach, Christian education, evangelism, and safety. They will advocate for inclusion of children from various socioeconomic, cultural, and racial/ethnic backgrounds. Weekday ministry board(s) accountability should be placed within the local church organizational structure with consideration to the group

responsible for the congregation's education ministry.

3. *Young People's Ministries*—The term *young people* is inclusive of all persons from approximately twelve through thirty years of age. The term encompasses both youth and young-adult ministries and allows for age flexibility given the different age definitions for young people in various cultures around the world. The term *youth ministry* is an inclusive title, encompassing all the concerns of the Church and all activities by, with, and for youth. The youth ministry of The United Methodist Church shall include all persons from approximately twelve through eighteen years of age (generally persons in the seventh grade through the twelfth grade, taking into account the grouping of youth in the public schools), who are currently or potentially associated with the church or any of its activities. Youth who are professing members of the church have all rights and responsibilities of church membership except voting on matters prohibited by state law (*See* ¶ 226.5). The term *young-adult ministry* is an inclusive title, encompassing all the concerns of the Church and all activities by, with, and for young adults. The young-adult ministry of The United Methodist Church shall include all persons from approximately eighteen to thirty who are currently or potentially associated with the church or any of its activities. Young adults who are professing members of the church have all rights and responsibilities of church membership.

a) The **coordinator of youth ministries and the youth council**, when organized, shall be responsible for recommending to the church council activities, program emphases, and settings for youth. The coordinator and council shall use available resources and means to inform youth concerning the Youth Service Fund and shall cultivate its support; *provided* that prior to this cultivation or as a part of it, the youth shall have been challenged to assume their financial responsibilities in connection with the total program and budget of the local church.

b) The local church may designate one of its settings as the **United Methodist Youth Fellowship**.

c) In each charge conference there may be a **youth council**.

(1) The council shall be made up of no less than three-fourths youth. Nominations for members of the council (both youth and adults) shall come from the youth group (or related structure). The nominations will then be sent to the committee on lay leadership for approval and then to the charge conference for approval.

The council shall be composed of:

(a) At least one young adult.

(b) The coordinator of youth ministries (or related position) and other related staff as ex-officio members with voice but not vote.

(c) Any youth serving on a district, conference, jurisdictional, or general Church board or agency.

(d) Any adult serving on a district, conference, jurisdictional, or general Church youth council or organization.

(2) All offices of this council shall be held by youth. No member shall serve for more than four consecutive years.

(3) The council shall meet at least semi-annually. It may meet additionally at the request

of the pastor, coordinator of youth ministries (or related person), or an officer of the committee.

Responsibilities:

(a) To assist the coordinator of youth ministry (or related position) and other related staff in planning and developing activities, program emphases, and settings for youth in the local church.

(b) To assist the coordinator of youth ministry (or related position) in finding and encouraging qualified adults and interns to work with youth in the local church.

(c) To develop a covenant for all adult volunteer youth workers.

(d) To encourage and facilitate the furthering of education for the coordinator of youth ministries (or related position) and related staff.

(e) To encourage and educate youth on possible careers in professional ministry and how to consider any vocational calling and opportunity to serve.

(f) To be a resource for other churches interested in starting or revitalizing youth ministry within their own local churches.

(g) To further educate youth and adults on The United Methodist Church as a connectional church by encouraging and supporting the participation of youth and adults in district, annual, jurisdictional, and central conferences, and other general Church ministries.

(h) To promote and educate persons about the Youth Service Fund.

(i) To promote the camping and retreat ministries within the local church.

(j) To empower youth to be full participants and active leaders in The United Methodist Church.

(k) To consult with the pastor/staff parish relations committee in: 1) developing written job descriptions; 2) nominating; 3) evaluating the job performance of the coordinator of youth ministries (or related position) and any other volunteer and paid staff related to youth ministry in the local church.

(l) It is strongly recommended that the council develop a program budget for their ministry.

d) The **coordinator of young adult ministries and the young-adult council**, when organized, shall be responsible for recommending to the church council the activities, program emphases, and settings for young adults.

4. Civic youth-serving agencies and Scouting ministries offer another setting for ministry to children, youth, their leaders, and their families. These opportunities would include the Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., Camp Fire U.S.A., 4-H, or other appropriate organizations in the central conferences. The God and Country award program may be available to all appropriate age-level participants of the local church education program including the church school, youth ministry, and Scouting ministries.

a) Each local church may have a local church scouting coordinator (or the central conferences equivalent) who shall relate to the church council, the superintendent of the church school, the coordinator of children's ministries, the coordinator of youth ministries, and all the various youth-serving agency structures. The local church scouting coordinator (or the central conferences equivalent) may relate to the district scouting coordinator and annual conference

scouting coordinator who are resource and training advisors. All churches shall be encouraged to have a signed partnership agreement with all the units of these agencies which are part of their ministry.

5. United Methodist Women—In every local church there shall be an organized unit of **United Methodist Women**. The following is the authorized constitution:

Article 1. Name—The name of this organization shall be United Methodist Women.

Article 2. Relationships—The unit of United Methodist Women in the local church is directly related to the district and conference organizations of United Methodist Women and to the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church.

Article 3. Purpose—The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the Church.

Article 4. Membership—Membership shall be open to any woman who indicates her desire to belong and to participate in the global mission of the Church through United Methodist Women. The pastor(s) shall be an ex officio member of the local unit and of its executive committee.

Article 5. Officers and Committees—The local unit shall elect a president, a vice president, a secretary, a treasurer, and a committee on nominations. Additional officers and committees shall be elected or appointed as needed, in accordance with the plans of the Women's Division as set forth in the bylaws for the local unit of United Methodist Women.

Article 6. Funds—*a)* The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall secure funds for the fulfillment of its purpose.

b) All funds from whatever source secured by the unit of United Methodist Women belong to the organization and shall be disbursed only in accordance with its constitution and by its order.

c) The total budget secured and administered by the organized unit in the local church shall include: (1) pledges and other money for the programs and responsibilities of the Women's Division to be directed through regular channels of finance of United Methodist Women; and (2) funds to be used in mission locally, which shall include amounts for administration and membership development.

d) The organized unit in the local church shall make an annual pledge to the total budget of the district or conference organization of United Methodist Women.

e) All undesignated funds channeled to the Women's Division shall be appropriated by the division.

Article 7. Meetings—The organized unit in the local church shall hold such meetings for implementing the purpose and transacting its business as the unit itself shall decide.

Article 8. Relationship in the Local Church—The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall encourage all women to participate in the total life and work of the Church and shall support them in assuming positions of responsibility and leadership.

Article 9. Amendments—Proposed amendments to this constitution may be sent to the recording secretary of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries before the last annual meeting of the division in the quadrennium.

Note: For a description of the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries and its subsidiary organizations, *see* ¶¶ 1317-1325.

¶ 257. United Methodist Men

Each church or charge shall have an organized unit of **United Methodist Men** chartered and annually renewed through the General Commission on United Methodist Men. Other organized men's ministry groups in a local United Methodist Church shall annually report to the charge conference and be resourced through the General Commission on United Methodist Men. All local church men's organizations shall provide a dedicated ministry for building men spiritually and involving men in the total ministry of the Church (¶ 2302).

1. Local church resource material for supporting effective men's ministries shall be provided by the district, conference, and jurisdictional organizations of United Methodist Men and the General Commission on United Methodist Men (¶ 2302).

2. United Methodist Men exists to declare the centrality of Christ in every man's life. Men's ministry leads to the spiritual growth of men and effective discipleship. This purpose is served as men are called to model the servant leadership of Jesus Christ.

3. Individual and group strategies form the foundation of United Methodist Men ministry.

a) Enhance Evangelism, Mission, and Spiritual Life (EMS), as men become servant leaders.

b) Advocate programs that train men within local churches to promote specific ministries including prayer, missions, stewardship, and civic/youth serving ministries.

c) Forge pastoral partnerships by men committed to the effective support and service of clergy and local congregations.

d) Enhance organizational strength through effective leadership, resources, membership growth, and financial accountability.

e) Assist men in their ever-changing relationships, roles, and responsibilities in the family setting, workplace, and society.

f) Understand the organization, doctrines, and beliefs of The United Methodist Church.

g) Fulfill the membership vows through the commitment to prayer, presence, gifts, and service in congregational life.

h) Fulfill the Great Commission with and through The United Methodist Church as one part of the Body of Christ.

4. Men seeking membership in a local unit of United Methodist Men will be asked to subscribe to the major strategies listed in § 3 above and to these personal objectives:

a) To engage daily in Bible study and prayer.

b) To bear witness to Christ's way in daily work and in all personal contacts through words and actions.

c) To engage in Christian service.

5. United Methodist Men may be organized in one or more components within a local church as needed. Multiple local churches may also form a single unit of United Methodist Men according to their needs.

6. Membership shall be open to any man who indicates his desire to belong and to participate in the ministry of the church through United Methodist Men.

7. The appointed clergy of the local church or charge shall be ex officio member(s) of the unit and its executive committee

8. The organized unit of United Methodist Men shall secure funds for the fulfillment of its purpose. All funds from whatever source secured by the United Methodist Men's unit belong to the organization and shall be disbursed only in accordance with its constitution and/or by-laws and by its order.

a) United Methodist Men's unit may have their own bank accounts.

b) The UM Men's unit shall have an annual financial audit.

¶ 258. *Other Age-Level Councils*

Where the size of the church and the extent of the program indicate the need, the work of the church council (or other appropriate body) may be facilitated by one or more age-level councils and/or a family council, or such other means as fit the needs of the congregation. The membership of these councils shall be elected by the church council (or other appropriate body).

Administrative Committees

¶ 259.

1. There shall be elected annually, by the charge conference in each local church, a **committee on lay leadership** that is composed of professing members of the local church. The charge of this committee is to identify, develop, deploy, evaluate, and monitor Christian spiritual leadership for the local congregation. Members of the committee shall engage in and be attentive to developing and enhancing their own Christian spiritual life in light of the mission of the Church (Part V, Chapter One, Section 1).

In conducting its work, the committee shall engage in biblical and theological reflections on the mission of the church, the primary task, and ministries of the local church. It shall provide a means of identifying the spiritual gifts and abilities of the membership. The committee shall work with the church council, or alternative administrative bodies, to determine the diverse ministry tasks of the congregation and the skills needed for leadership.

a) The committee on lay leadership shall serve throughout the year to guide the church council, or alternative structure, on matters regarding the leadership (other than employed staff) of the congregation so as to focus on mission and ministry as the context for service; guide the development and training of spiritual leaders; recruit, nurture, and support spiritual leaders; and assist the church council, or alternative structure, in assessing the changing leadership needs.

b) The committee shall recommend to the charge conference, at its annual session, the

names of people to serve as officers and leaders of designated ministries of the church council, or alternative administrative body required for the work of the church and as the law of the church requires or as the charge conference deems necessary to its work.

c) This committee is to be composed of not more than nine persons, in addition to the pastor and the lay leader. At least one young adult elected by the charge conference shall serve as a member of the committee. One or more members elected by the charge conference may be youth. The pastor shall be the chairperson. A layperson elected by the committee on lay leadership shall serve as the vice chairperson of the committee.

d) In order to secure experience and stability, the membership shall be divided into three classes, one of which shall be elected each year for a three-year term. To begin the process of rotation where such has not been in place, in the first year, one class shall be elected for one year, one class for two years, and one class for three years. Each year's new class, and vacancies at the time of charge conference, shall be elected from nominees, from the floor of the charge conference and/or through the recommendation of the committee on lay leadership. Retiring members of the committee shall not succeed themselves. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee. When vacancies occur during the year, nominees shall be elected by the church council, or alternative church structure, with the permission of the district superintendent.

e) In the identification and selection process, care shall be given that the leadership of ministries reflects inclusivity and diversity.

2. There shall be elected annually by the charge conference in each local church a **committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations** who are professing members of the local church or charge or associate members (§ 227), except in cases where central conference legislation or local law provides otherwise. People serving on this committee must be engaged in and attentive to their Christian spiritual development so as to give proper leadership in the responsibilities with which the committee is entrusted.

In conducting its work, the committee shall identify and clarify its values for ministry. It shall engage in biblical and theological reflections on the mission of the church, the primary task, and ministries of the local church.

The committee shall reflect biblically and theologically on the role and work of the pastor(s) and staff as they carry out their leadership responsibilities. The committee shall assist the pastor(s) and staff in assessing their gifts and setting priorities for leadership and service. It is the responsibility of the committee to communicate with the committee on lay leadership and/or the church council when there is a need for other leaders or for employed staff to perform in areas where utilization of the gifts of the pastor(s) and staff proves an inappropriate stewardship of time.

a) The committee shall be composed of not fewer than five nor more than nine persons representative of the total charge. One of the members shall be a young adult and one member may be a youth. In addition, the lay leader and a lay member of the annual conference shall be members. No staff member or immediate family member of a pastor or staff member may serve on the committee. Only one person from an immediate family residing in the same household shall serve on the committee.

b) In order to secure experience and stability, the membership shall be divided into three classes, one of which shall be elected each year for a three-year term. The lay member of the annual conference and the lay leader are exempt from the three-year term. To begin the process of rotation where such a process has not been in place, on the first year one class shall be elected for one year, one class for two years, and one class for three years. Retiring members of the committee shall not succeed themselves. When vacancies occur during the year, nominees shall be elected at the church council (or alternative church structure).

c) In those charges where there is more than one church, the committee shall include at least one representative from each local church.

d) The committees on pastor-parish relations of charges that are in cooperative parish ministries shall meet together to consider the professional leadership needs of the cooperative parish ministry as a whole.

e) The committee shall meet at least quarterly. It shall meet additionally at the request of the bishop, the district superintendent, the pastor, any other person accountable to the committee, or the chairperson of the committee. To fulfill his or her obligation under ordination, his or her connectional responsibility under appointment, and his or her duty as a pastor, the pastor should be present at each meeting of the committee on pastor-parish relations or staff-parish relations except where he or she voluntarily excuses himself or herself. The committee shall meet only with the knowledge of the pastor and/or the district superintendent. It may meet with the district superintendent without the pastor being present. However, the pastor or any member of the staff under consideration shall be notified prior to such meeting at which a pastor's or clergy staff member's continued appointment or a lay staff member's employment is discussed and be brought into consultation immediately thereafter. The committee shall meet in closed session, and information shared in the committee shall be confidential.

f) In the event that only one congregation on a charge containing more than one church has concerns it wishes to share, its member(s) in the committee may meet separately with the pastor or any other person accountable to the committee or the district superintendent, but only with the knowledge of the pastor and/or district superintendent.

g) The duties of the committee shall include the following:

(1) To encourage, strengthen, nurture, support, and respect the pastor(s) and staff and their family(s).

(2) To promote unity in the church(es).

(3) To confer with and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on the matters pertaining to the effectiveness of ministry; relationships with the congregation; conditions that may impede the effectiveness of ministry; and to interpret the nature and function of the ministry.

(4) To confer with, consult, and counsel the pastor(s) and staff on matters pertaining to priorities in the use of gifts, skills, and time and priorities for the demands and effectiveness of the mission and ministry of the congregation.

(5) To provide evaluation at least annually for the use of the pastor(s) and staff in an ongoing effective ministry and for identifying continuing educational needs and plans.

(6) To communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry

in The United Methodist Church regarding open itinerancy, the preparation for ordained ministry, and the Ministerial Education Fund.

(7) To develop and approve written job descriptions and titles for associate pastors and other staff members in cooperation with the senior pastor. The term *associate pastor* is used as a general term to indicate any pastoral appointment in a local church other than the pastor in charge (*see* ¶ 339). Committees shall be encouraged to develop specific titles for associate pastors that reflect the job descriptions and expectations.

(8) To consult with the pastor and staff concerning continuing education and spiritual renewal, to arrange with the church council for the necessary time and financial assistance for the attendance of the pastor and/or staff at such continuing education and spiritual renewal events as may serve their professional and spiritual growth, and to encourage staff members to seek professional certification in their fields of specialization.

(9) To enlist, interview, evaluate, review, and recommend annually to the charge conference lay preachers and persons for candidacy for ordained ministry (*see* ¶¶ 247.8 and 310), and to enlist and refer to the General Board of Global Ministries persons for candidacy for missionary service, recognizing that The United Methodist Church affirms the biblical and theological support of persons regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, or disabilities for these ministries. Neither the pastor nor any member of the committee on pastor-parish relations shall be present during the consideration of a candidacy application or renewal for a member of their immediate family. The committee shall provide to the charge conference a list of students from the charge who are preparing for ordained ministry, diaconal ministry, and/or missionary service, and shall maintain contact with these students, supplying the charge conference with a progress report on each student.

(10) To interpret preparation for ordained ministry and the Ministerial Education Fund to the congregation.

(11) To confer with the pastor and/or other appointed members of the staff if it should become evident that the best interests of the charge and pastor(s) will be served by a change of pastor(s). The committee shall cooperate with the pastor(s), the district superintendent, and the bishop in securing clergy leadership. Its relationship to the district superintendent and the bishop shall be advisory only.9(5) (*See* ¶¶ 430-433.)

(12) To recommend to the church council, after consultation with the pastor, the professional and other staff positions (whether employee or contract) needed to carry out the work of the church or charge. The committee and the pastor shall recommend to the church council a written statement of policy and procedures regarding the process for hiring, contracting, evaluating, promoting, retiring, and dismissing staff personnel who are not subject to episcopal appointment as ordained clergy. Until such a policy has been adopted, the committee and the pastor shall have the authority to hire, contract, evaluate, promote, retire, and dismiss nonappointed personnel. When persons are hired or contracted, consideration shall be given to the training qualifications and certification standards set forth by the general Church agency to which such positions are related. The committee shall further recommend to the church council a provision for adequate health and life insurance and severance pay for all lay employees. In addition, the committee shall recommend that the church council provide, effective on and after

January 1, 2006, 100 percent vested pension benefits of at least three percent of compensation for lay employees of the local church who work at least 1040 hours per year, are at least 21 years of age, and have at least one year of permanent service. The church council shall have authority to provide such pension benefits through either a denominational pension program administered by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits or another pension program administered by another pension provider.

(13) To recommend to the charge conference, when the size of the employed staff of the charge makes it desirable, the establishment of a **personnel committee**. This committee shall be composed of such members of the committee on pastor-parish relations as it may designate and such additional members as the charge conference may determine.

(14) To educate the church community on the value of diversity of selection in clergy and lay staff and develop a commitment to same.

(15) Members of the committee on pastor-parish relations (or staff-parish relations) shall keep themselves informed of personnel matters in relationship to the Church's policy, professional standards, liability issues, and civil law. They are responsible for communicating and interpreting such matters to staff. Committee members should make themselves available for educational and training opportunities provided by the conference, district, and/or other arenas that will enable them to be effective in their work.

(16) To consult on matters pertaining to pulpit supply, proposals for compensation, travel expense, vacation, health and life insurance, pension, housing (which may be a church-owned parsonage or housing allowance in lieu of parsonage if in compliance with the policy of the annual conference), and other practical matters affecting the work and families of the pastor and staff, and to make annual recommendations regarding such matters to the church council, reporting budget items to the committee on finance. The parsonage is to be mutually respected by the pastor's family as the property of the church and by the church as a place of privacy for the pastor's family. The chairperson of the committee on pastor-parish relations, the chairperson of the board of trustees, and the pastor shall make an annual review of the church-owned parsonage to assure proper maintenance.

3. There shall be a **board of trustees**, whose membership and duties are detailed in ¶¶ 2524-2551.

4. There shall be a **committee on finance**, elected annually by the charge conference upon recommendation by the committee on lay leadership or from the floor, composed of the chairperson; the pastor(s); a lay member of the annual conference; the chairperson of the church council; the chairperson or representative of the committee on pastor-parish relations; a representative of the trustees to be selected by the trustees; the chairperson of the ministry group on stewardship; the lay leader; the financial secretary; the treasurer; the church business administrator; and other members to be added as the charge conference may determine. It is recommended that the chairperson of the committee on finance shall be a member of the church council. The financial secretary, treasurer, and church business administrator, if paid employees, shall be members without vote.

The positions of treasurer and financial secretary should not be combined and held by one person, and the persons holding these two positions should not be immediate family members.

Where there is no stewardship ministry area, stewardship shall be the responsibility of a subgroup of the committee on finance or shall be assigned to a task group that shall report to the church council.

All financial askings to be included in the annual budget of the local church shall be submitted to the committee on finance. The committee on finance shall compile annually a complete budget for the local church and submit it to the church council for review and adoption. The committee on finance shall be charged with responsibility for developing and implementing plans that will raise sufficient income to meet the budget adopted by the church council. It shall administer the funds received according to instructions from the church council.

The committee shall carry out the church council's directions in guiding the treasurer(s) and financial secretary.

a) The committee shall designate at least two persons not of the immediate family residing in the same household to count the offering. They shall work under the supervision of the financial secretary. A record of all funds received shall be given to the financial secretary and treasurer. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in accordance with the procedures established by the committee on finance. The financial secretary shall keep records of the contributions and payments.

b) The **church treasurer(s)** shall disburse all money contributed to causes represented in the local church budget, and such other funds and contributions as the church council may determine. The treasurer(s) shall remit each month to the conference treasurer all World Service and conference benevolence funds then on hand. Contributions to benevolence shall not be used for any cause other than that to which they have been given. The church treasurer shall make regular and detailed reports on funds received and expended to the committee on finance and the church council.10(6) The treasurer(s) shall be adequately bonded.

c) The committee shall make provision for an annual audit of the records of the financial officers of the local church and all its organizations and shall report to the charge conference.

d) The committee shall recommend to the church council proper depositories for the church's funds. Funds received shall be deposited promptly in the name of the local church.

e) Contributions designated for specific causes and objects shall be promptly forwarded according to the intent of the donor and shall not be used for any other purpose.11(7)

f) After the budget of the local church has been approved, additional appropriations or changes in the budget must be approved by the church council.

g) The committee shall prepare annually a report to the church council of all designated funds that are separate from the current expense budget.

5. The church council may appoint such other committees as it deems advisable, including: committee on communications, committee on records and history, committee on health and welfare, and committee on memorial gifts.

Endnotes

1 (Popup - Popup)

5. *See* Judicial Council Decisions 469, 500.

2 (Popup - Popup)

6. *See* Judicial Council Decisions 213, 252, 461.

3 (Popup - Popup)

7. *See* Judicial Council Decision 495.

4 (Popup - Popup)

8. *See* Judicial Council Decisions 170, 305, 328, 342, 469.

5 (Popup - Popup)

9. *See* Judicial Council Decision 701.

6 (Popup - Popup)

10. *See* Judicial Council Decisions 63, 320, 539.

7 (Popup - Popup)

11. *See* Judicial Council Decision 976.